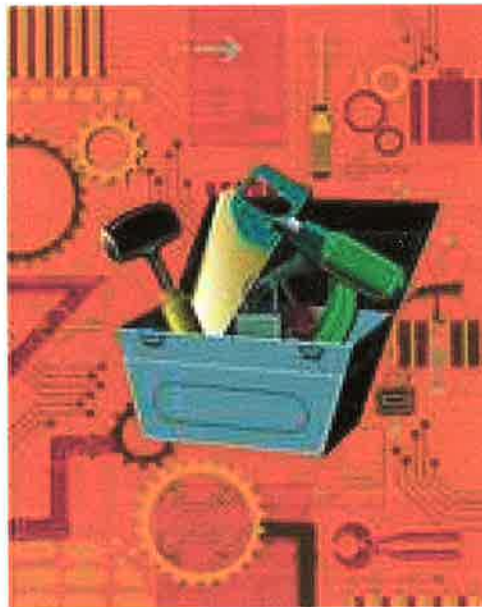


Public Relations:

A Valuable Tool in Your Tool Chest



Keith J. Vincent
PPAI
Director of Marketing & PR



Official Statement on Public Relations

Public relations helps our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions. It serves to bring private and public policies into harmony.

Public relations serves a wide variety of institutions in society such as businesses, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, foundations, hospitals, schools, colleges and religious institutions. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationships with many different audiences or publics such as employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders and other institutions, and with society at large.

The managements of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their publics in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The public relations practitioner acts as a counselor to management and as a mediator, helping to translate private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action.

As a management function, public relations encompasses the following:

- Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization.
- Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.
- Researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communication to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing, financial, fund raising, employee, community or government relations and other programs.
- Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy.
- Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities — in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.
- Examples of the knowledge that may be required in the professional practice of public relations include communication arts, psychology, social psychology, sociology, political science, economics and the principles of management and ethics. Technical knowledge and skills are required for opinion research, public-issues analysis, media relations, direct mail, institutional advertising, publications, film/video productions, special events, speeches and presentations.

In helping to define and implement policy, the public relations practitioner uses a variety of professional communication skills and plays an integrative role both within the organization and between the organization and the external environment.

Formally adopted by the PRSA National Assembly, November 6, 1982.

7 Steps to Developing a Public Relations Plan

1. **Define Your Target Audience:** Determine who it is you are trying to reach. Are you trying to reach association members, nonmembers, distributors, suppliers, and/or buyers?
2. **Conduct Research:** Determine what the target audience thinks of your association, product, or service, before you implement your PR campaign, by doing some initial research. Whether formal or informal, this research will help you evaluate your successes later.
3. **Set Objectives:** What do you want to accomplish? Your PR objectives should integrate with your overall marketing efforts. If you are marketing your tradeshow, your PR efforts should help strengthen audience opinion and brand awareness of the tradeshow.
4. **Decide Key Messages:** Once you've determined your objectives, work on messaging. What do you want your audiences to know? Develop some very specific statements that you will incorporate into all of your PR efforts.
5. **Establish Financial & Human Resources:** How much money and how many people do you have to dedicate to this effort? Do you have to find "free" channels to communicate your message?
6. **Determine Tactics:** Will you use a media relations campaign, social media, testimonials, community relations (speaking opportunities)?
7. **Evaluate Campaign:** Did you move the needle? Through research questionnaires and polls you can determine if you were able to meet your objectives.

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The logo for 'Promotional Consultant TODAY' is displayed on a dark red rectangular background. The word 'promotional' is in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. 'consultant' is in a smaller, orange, lowercase, sans-serif font. 'TODAY' is in a large, white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

Why PR Works

One of the most effective ways to get free publicity for your business is to get interesting news stories about it into the public domain. *Promotional Consultant Today* shares this simple-to-follow guide for preparing a news release that will catch the eye of journalists, as well as some of the pitfalls to avoid.

Why do some stories provide good publicity?

News stories or articles about businesses are more widely read and believed than advertisements in newspapers and magazines. The publicity that news stories generate can be extremely valuable to your business.

What types of stories get coverage in the news?

Journalists are always on the lookout for newsworthy articles that will be interesting, informative or entertaining to their readers, so it's essential that your news release is prepared to do the following:

- Grab attention immediately with an eye-catching headline.
- Provide information about something new, different, unusual or revealing.
- Has a human-interest angle that will capture readers' imaginations.

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**TOP SHELF
TIP NO. 73**

"It is
sometimes
possible to
change the
attitudes
of
millions
but
impossible
to change
the
attitude of
one man."

Edward Bernays, father
of public relations

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- **Take advantage of these savings** and avoid the last minute inventory rush! After June 30th, all applicable column pricing will be in effect.

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The most widely used type of news story is a human-interest feature. People like to read about what other people are doing. Ideally you should put together a news release that communicates information with this type of human appeal. These could include:

- Your business or staff winning an award or raising a large amount of money for a local charity.
- Details of your innovative new product or a groundbreaking service that will have tangible benefits for its users (you can also make a special offer of the product/service to the readers).
- Your business gaining a big, new order or creating jobs in the local area.
- Your business launching a competition or special event involving local people or sponsoring a community project.

Preparing your news release

Your news release should contain the answers to the following basic questions that journalists ask of any kind of news story.

- What is the story about?
- Who is involved?
- Where has it happened?
- When did it happen?
- Why did it happen?

These five W's should be addressed succinctly in the first paragraph of your news release, which if possible, should be no longer than 50 words.

Tomorrow, *PCT* looks at more basic rules for writing and distributing a news release.

Source: A contributing writer to Suite 101.com, [Tony Fowler](#) has had a varied career with qualifications ranging from electrical engineering to marketing. Throughout his life, he has always had an interest in business writing along with fictional writing. His wide range of interests also includes business, marketing, management and history as well as film/TV, cooking and self help/psychology.

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Get The Media Exposure You Deserve

Media relations is a key component to the marketing mix, and one that requires little to no money to implement, unlike other channels such as advertising and direct marketing. It does, however, require preparedness, planning, research and timeliness. Today's issue is the first of a two-part series on what it takes to talk to the media and ensure coverage for your business. Even if you can't guarantee the outcome of the story, the more confident and prepared you are, the more likely your organization will receive positive, long-lasting exposure.

Building Good Media Relations Can Grow Your Business Part 1

As a business owner, you've probably heard media exposure can greatly help your company, especially during tough economic times when marketing budgets are low and competition is high. The truth is, learning to leverage the power of the media can help you stand out from the competition without expending your resources. You can adopt strategies that will cause interviewers to come back to you time after time.

First and most important, be respectful of the reporter or editor's time. Media professionals are among the most overtaxed and pressured people you will ever meet. Your first question should be, "Are you on deadline?" If they are on deadline, ask, "When would be a better time to call you?" No need to risk alienating or annoying them. You can always call back.

**TOP SHELF
TIP NO. 9**

**"Without
promotion
something
terrible
happens...
Nothing!"**

P.T. Barnum, 1810-1891,
creator of The Greatest
Show on Earth



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Here are a few ideas to help you relax and make sure editors and reporters accept your articles or interview you for pieces they are writing or videotaping.

1. Become familiar with the journalists with which you would like to cultivate relationships. Follow their work, and let them know when you enjoy something they have written. Comment on something specific. Familiarize yourself with the content. Look at the ads to see what audience the advertisers are targeting.

Once you become familiar with the audience, you will understand what the audience wants. This will allow you to tailor your content, making it more valuable to the reporter or editor. Providing great content is the best way to motivate reporters to contact you in the future. That way you can fashion the content of your remarks as you prepare for an interview or, if you are writing an article, you can strike the appropriate tone.

Reporters, editors and talk-show hosts will respect you for the extra effort you make to ensure your ideas are valuable to their readers, listeners or audiences.

2. Be observant during conversations and pick up personal details. If the reporter is heading out the door to pick up children from soccer, make a note of it. Remember to ask about the children's progress next time you call. Also, be on the lookout for items of interest to a soccer parent, for example. This costs nothing, and therefore there will be no breach of ethics on the reporter's part to accept it. At the same time, he or she will appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Source: Pam [Lontos](#) is president of PR/PR, a public relations firm based in Orlando, Florida. She is author of *I See Your Name Everywhere* and is a former vice president of sales for Disney's Shamrock Broadcasting.

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The logo features the words "promotional consultant" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with "promotional" in white and "consultant" in orange. To the right, the word "TODAY" is written in a large, white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark red rectangular background.

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Grow Your Business With Media Relations

Yesterday's issue focused on the value and effectiveness of the practice of media relations as a low-cost, high-results option to your marketing mix. Reporters and journalists can be intimidating, but these tips will help you to position yourself as a dependable and helpful source of knowledge for reporters. The end result will be free exposure for your business that's more far-reaching and valuable than advertising alone.

1. Reporters and editors often spend most of their time in the world of ideas. When you are engaged in conversation, remember to bring up the topic they like to talk about. In a similar vein, if you see a subject come up in the news you know will interest a reporter, copy and send it to him or her.

2. Don't let months pass without contact. If you stumble across an event or idea related to an area of the reporter's or editor's interest, call and leave a quick voicemail about it.

The goal is relationship building. If the reporter or editor you would like to get to know is local, you can drop by the office (with appropriate notice) or even invite him or her to lunch.

3. When you are interviewed, give good quotes. Strive for simple, declarative sentences. Use concrete images. Answer the question. Help the reporter do a good job, and once again your effort will be appreciated.

**TOP SHELF
TIP NO. 10**

"The three main elements of public relations are practically as old as society: informing people, persuading people or integrating people with people."

Edward Bernays (1891-1995), the father of public relations

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At the end of an interview, ask about other stories the reporter is currently covering. Explain how you may be able to contribute and offer a unique angle that may interest their audiences. And make it clear that you're eager to be an accessible source of information in the future.

4. Don't forget to maintain your relationships once they are established. Sometimes the reporter will call you as a source, but you just aren't right for that particular subject matter. You can still be helpful by suggesting another person to call. Or, if the reporter needs a second or third source to interview, suggest names of other people. The reporter will remember this and be grateful.

Effective media relations are all about relationships. If you develop, nurture and maintain good relationships with reporters and editors, you will become the expert source they seek out time after time, which will help you stand out from the competition and boost your sales.

Source: Pam [Lontos](#) is president of PR/PR, a public relations firm based in Orlando, Florida. She is author of *I See Your Name Everywhere* and is a former vice president of sales for Disney's Shamrock Broadcasting.

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Writing Your News Release

Yesterday, *Promotional Consultant Today* discussed the value of public relations as well as the types of stories that are newsworthy. Today, *PCT* shares key tips for preparing your own well-written news release.

- Give each news release a catchy, attention-grabbing headline, then summarize the key points of your story in a short, snappy first paragraph. You need to attract the attention of busy journalists who receive hundreds of news releases every day, so don't waste this opportunity.
- Keep it concise and to the point. A news release should be no more than two pages long. Avoid "sales speak" and outright advertisements of your business. Where possible get quotes from those people involved in the story as this will make the story realistic.
- Always make sure that the words News Release are placed in bold type at the top of the page followed on the next line by the date on which the release will be issued. This can sometimes include an embargo (the earliest date on which the release may be published).

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Cassandra Johnson

**TOP SHELF
TIP NO. 74**

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."

George Bernard Shaw

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

It's A Regional Thing

They may be small in resources, but they're large in impact. Our Regional Associations are built upon, powered by and influential because of member volunteers—a dedicated group committed to advancing their Association and the industry.

PPAI and Regional Association Council (RAC) is again recognizing that special individual who:

- Most exemplifies volunteer leadership
- Has brought about significant change through his or her contributions

Honor the hard work, late nights and endless energy by nominating an outstanding regional volunteer leader for PPAI RAC Volunteer of the Year.

Deadline for entries:
Opens April 1, 2011 • Closes April 29, 2011

For additional details, including eligibility requirements, visit www.ppai.org/awards.




Write your news release with the assumption that the reader knows nothing about the subject. Make sure the information you include is clear and useful. Do not use abbreviations or technical jargon.

- Any additional information about the story or your business can be included in a 'Notes for Editors' section after the main body of the release.
- Always include a contact name and contact details, so that journalists can get in touch with you to check details or find out any additional information.
- Make sure the spelling and grammar are correct. Take the time to proofread the release, even getting someone else to do it for you.
- Where possible, include a high-resolution photo or link to a video when you e-mail your release. Journalists very often need photographs and video to support the stories they run.

To wrap up our series on news releases, tomorrow *PCT* shares tips for distributing your release.

Source: A contributing writer to Suite 101.com, [Tony Fowler](#) has had a varied career with qualifications ranging from electrical engineering to marketing. Throughout his life, he has always had an interest in writing along with fictional writing. His wide range of interests also includes business, marketing management and history as well as film/TV, cooking and self help/psychology.

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Getting The Word Out

For the past two days, *Promotional Consultant Today* has shared the value of public relations and how to generate news about your organization. Today, we wrap up this series with tips on how and where to distribute your well-written news release.

How To Distribute Your News Release

- Create a list of targeted publications and reporters for your local media sources and for publications in your industry or in the marketplaces you serve.
- Check your target publications' websites (or give them a call) to find out to whom to send the release and if there are any particular requirements for receiving news releases.
- Keep the subject line of your e-mail short and compelling. Remember, it needs to grab the attention of the person reading it.

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PUBLIC
RELATIONS**

Compiled by
**Cassandra
Johnson**

TOP
SHELF TIP
NO. 75

"The public is the only critic whose opinion is worth anything at all."

Mark Twain

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If you send the news release by e-mail, which is strongly advised, include it in the body of the message in plain text, as well as in an attachment. Some attachments can be rejected

by an organization's e-mail filters due to the possibilities of harboring viruses.

- Don't wait too late to send your news release, particularly if it is publicizing an upcoming event or photo opportunity.
- Try to make your news release relevant. Give it an angle or a theme that ties it to current events in the news, or to a specific time of year.
- In addition to sending your news release to media, be sure to post it on your website too.

Source: A contributing writer to Suite 101.com, Tony Fowler has had a varied career with qualifications ranging from electrical engineering to marketing. Throughout his life, he has always had an interest in writing along with fictional writing. His wide range of interests also includes business, marketing management and history as well as film/TV, cooking and self help/psychology.

How to Give a Good Interview

Giving an interview is easy. A good interview is like a focused, directed conversation between two professionals.

- Be yourself.
- Let the interviewer lead.
- Don't talk too quickly.
- Don't be put off by tape recorders.
- Agree to an agenda and schedule.
- Don't ask for questions in advance.
- Do your own research.
- Do think about what you would like to say.
- Remember what the interviewer wants.
- The interviewer is human.
- Pick your time well.
- Be accessible.
- Turn up on time.
- Don't ask to review the article
- Prepare yourself
- There's no such thing as off the record
- Don't let the journalist put words in your mouth.

By Matthew Stibbe

PR Checklist for Media Relations

by John Sternal on June 4, 2009 – Understandingmarketing.com

Many **small businesses** are still confused about how to develop a really good story. Use the following point system to figure out just how strong your story is. Go through each of the line items in the list and answer the questions. Each time you answer yes, add the points to your total score. Simply put, the higher the score, the better your chances for a story.

Do you have a **press release** for background?

Yes: 2 points

Are you available to speak with a **reporter** for the story?

Yes: 2 points

Do you have any **photos** of **products**, **executives** or your company to offer the reporter?

Yes: 4 points

Do you have any pre-produced **background video** you can offer the reporter (especially for TV)?

Yes: 4 points

Do you have any **charts** or **graphs** you can share with the reporter for the story?

Yes: 2 points

Do you have **audio sound bites** to provide the media for radio?

Yes: 2 points

Do you have any **multimedia** to provide the media (for Internet stories)?

Yes: 2 points

Do you have any **customers** that are willing to speak to the reporter on behalf of your company?

Yes: 7 points

Do you have any **industry analysts** or other industry insiders who can speak to the reporter?

Yes: 6 points

Do you have credible third-party **industry stats** or research to support your story?

Yes: 3 points

Is there a larger **local/national trend** you can apply in your story?

Yes: 4 points

Is your announcement TRULY the **first time** anyone has ever done this?

Yes: 6 points

Do you have a **company executive** who can speak to a breaking news trend story right away?

Yes: 4 points

Do you have **revenue, sales** or any other **financial information** to provide the reporter?

Yes: 3 points

Can you truly define your company in very **easy-to-understand terms**?

Yes: 3 points

Are you launching a new **product** or **service** for the first time?

Yes: 2 points

Does your company make a truly exciting **technology** or **product**?

Yes: 2 points

Have you conducted a **survey** or **poll** that people would want to hear about?

Yes: 4 points

Are you planning a **publicity stunt** with lots of wow factor?

Yes: 4 points

Does your company have a really interesting and compelling **employee** human interest story?

Yes: 4 points

Is your company holding an event for **customers, community, vendors** or **industry**?

Yes: 4 points

Is something happening in your **industry** that is affecting your company in a compelling way?

Yes: 3 points

Does your company have a compelling angle for an upcoming **holiday**?

Yes: 2 points

Does your company have a compelling angle for a specific **season** (fall, winter)?

Yes: 2 points

Does your company have a compelling angle for a **calendar event** (back to school, July 4th)?

Yes: 2 points

Does your company have a compelling angle for an **environmental story**?

Yes: 3 points

Does your company have an angle for an **economic trends** story?

Yes: 2 points

Does your company have a story angle that involves a **celebrity**?

Yes: 3 points

Does your company have an angle that adds a new layer or twist to a **major national story**?

Yes: 3 points

Are you pitching your story to print and Internet media covering a specific **trade industry**?

Yes: 2 points

Do you have a **press kit** with company/management history information to provide the reporter?

Yes: 2 points

Are you comfortable talking about the **success** AND **failures** your company has taken for greater perspective?

Yes: 3 points

Does your story involve a **political issue** and do you have political figures willing to speak on your behalf?

Yes: 3 points

Add up all the points. Here is where you stand with your point totals:

0-20 points: Your story needs a lot of work

21-50 points: A reporter will listen to your story

51 - 75 points: A reporter will be intrigued by your story

76 - 100 points: You have a great chance of getting your story in the news